

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 EB-11 INT-08 COA-02 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1257

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: EFIS, MX

SUBJECT: MEXICAN KING MACKEREL EXPORTS TO PUERTO RICO

REF: STATE 068083

1. STATISTICS READILY AVAILABLE FROM MEXICAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN TRADE (IMCE) ARE COMPILATIONS AND ARE NOT SPECIFIC ENOUGH TO SHOW TRENDS IN EXPORTS OF KING MACKEREL TO PUERTO RICO. THE INSTITUTE HAS AGREED TO GO BACK TO THE SOURCE MATERIAL AND PROVIDE FIGURES AND NAMES OF SHIPPERS.

2. FISHERIES SECTION OF IMCE, WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING EXPORTS OF FISHERY PRODUCTS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING:
(A) KNOW OF NO LONG OR SHORT-RANGE PLANS TOWARDS PUERTO RICAN MARKET. IF THERE HAVE BEEN INCREASED SHIPMENTS TO PUERTO RICO INITIATIVE WAS PROBABLY BY U.S. OR PUERTO RICAN BUSINESSMEN.
(B) THIS EXPORT NOT SUBSIDIZED BY GOM. (C) LANDINGS OF KING AND SPANISH MACKEREL HAVE INCREASED IN VERACRUZ AND TAMPICO AREAS BUT BELIEVE THIS IS DUE TO SUCCESS OF GOM IN INTRODUCING MORE EFFICIENT GEAR AND METHODS AND IN ASSISTING IN THE ACQUISITION OF NEW BOATS.

3. MEXICAN OFFICIAL SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THERE COULD BE ANY LARGE INCREASES IN MACKEREL EXPORTS SINCE THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR FISH IN MEXICO AND GOM IS COMMITTED TO INCREASING DOMESTIC SUPPLY. SAID THAT IF DOMESTIC DEMAND CONTINUED TO INCREASE AS
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PREDICTED IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO RESTRICT EXPORTS.

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COMMENT: GOM HAS A SYSTEM OF PRICE CONTROLS THAT APPLY TO MOST BASIC COMMODITIES, AMONG THEM THE MOST POPULAR SPECIES OF FISH. THESE CONTROLS DO NOT APPLY TO EXPORTS AND IT IS OFTEN ADVANTAGEOUS TO EXPORT A PRODUCT RATHER THAN SELL IT DOMESTICALLY. AT TIMES THE CEILING PRICES HAVE BEEN SET SO LOW THAT IT IS PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO SELL THE PRODUCT LOCALLY AND MAKE A PROFIT. IN SUCH A SITUATION SHORTAGES SOON DEVELOP IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET AND THE SECRETARY OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE HAS TO PROHIBIT EXPORTS AND EVENTUALLY RAISE THE PRICE CEILING.

IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE ABOVE SITUATION NOW APPLIES TO KING MACKEREL SINCE THE PRESENT RETAIL PRICE OF WHOLE, GUTTED MACKEREL IS FIXED AT US\$0.60 PER KILO. SINCE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY LARGE INCREASES IN THE CATCH OF MACKEREL, ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN EXPORTS SHOULD SOON BE REFLECTED IN THE DOMESTIC SUPPLY AND WOULD RESULT IN RESTRICTIONS ON EXPORTS. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY IN THE CASE OF FROZEN TUNA, SARDINES, AND FISHMEAL.

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